

Message Text

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TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT DON OBERDORFER BY-LINER FRONT
PAGE WASHINGTON POST WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, HEADED
"SOVIETS AGREE TO SELL INDIA HEAVY WATER FOR REACTORS."

2. THE SOVIET UNION HAS AGREED TO SELL 200 TONS OF
HEAVY WATER FOR USE IN INDIA.S NUCLEAR PROGRAM FOLLOW-
ING CANADA.S REFUSAL ON NONPROLIFERATION GROUNDS TO
SUPPLY THE MATERIAL.

3. THE DECISION, WHICH BECAME-KNOWN WHEN INDIA REPOR-
TED THE TRANSACTION TO THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY
AGENCY, IS A RARE CASE OF SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO SUPPLY
SENSITIVE NUCLEAR MATERIALS TO A COUNTRY WITH A NUCLEAR
BOMB-MAKING CAPABILITY. AS SUCH IT IS CAUSING CONCERN
AMONG SOME U.S. OFFICIALS AND SENIOR MEMBERS OF PRESI-
DENT-ELECT JIMMY CARTER.S INCOMING TEAM.

4. SOVIET COOPERATION IS VITAL TO THE PLANS FOR INTER-
NATIONAL ACTION TO CURB THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

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AND UNTIL NOW THE RUSSIANS HAVE BEEN MORE CAUTIOUS THAN

THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES IN THEIR
NUCLEAR EXPORTS.

5. IN A MEETING LAST MONTH OF THE SEMI-SECRET "LONDON CLUB" OF NUCLEAR EXPORTING NATIONS, THE SOVIETS PROPOSED TO TIGHTEN CONTROLS IN AN IMPORTANT WAY ON ATOMIC SALES TO NONWEAPONS STATES. SEVERAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES ARE REPORTED TO HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE FAR-REACHING SOVIET PROPOSAL. THE UNITED STATES ASKED THAT A DECISION BE PUT OFF UNTIL THE NEXT SUPPLIER COUNTRY MEETING, WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION COMES TO POWER JAN. 20.

6. THE DECISION TO SELL THE HEAVY WATER TO INDIA APPEARS TO SOME EXPERTS TO BE INCONSISTENT WITH THE GENERALLY TOUGH SOVIET STAND. THESE EXPERTS SUGGEST THAT IN THIS CASE, RUSSIA PLACED A HIGHER VALUE ON ITS BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH A FRIENDLY COUNTRY THAN ON ITS NON-PROLIFERATION OBJECTIVES.

7. SOVIET OFFICIALS HAVE INDICATED THAT THE HEAVY WATER IS INTENDED FOR USE IN THE CANADIAN-SUPPLIED RAJASTHAN ATOMIC POWER PLANT II (RAPP II) AND THAT INTERNATIONAL INSPECTION AND SAFEGUARDS WILL BE REQUIRED AS WELL AS A PLEDGE FROM INDIA THAT THE MATERIAL WILL NOT BE USED TO MAKE ATOMIC WEAPONS. IN VIEW OF THIS, SOME U.S. EXPERTS BELIEVE THE SOVIET SALE TO INDIA -- WHILE IT IS UNUSUAL -- DOES NOT CONTRADICT RUSSIA'S NON-PROLIFERATION STAND.

8. HEAVY WATER, A SUBSTANCE RARELY FOUND IN NATURE, IS NECESSARY TO CONTROL NUCLEAR REACTIONS IN CERTAIN TYPES OF ATOMIC REACTORS. U.S. HEAVY WATER, SOLD DIRECTLY TO INDIA IN 1955 AND SUPPLIED LATER IN OTHER SHIPMENTS THROUGH CANADA, IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN USED BY INDIA IN PRODUCING THE MATERIAL FOR ITS MAY, 1974, NUCLEAR EXPLOSION.

9. INDIA NOW PRODUCES A SMALL AMOUNT OF HEAVY WATER IN
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ITS OWN PLANTS, BUT NOT ENOUGH TO FUEL A MAJOR INSTALLATION SUCH AS THE RAJASTHAN POWER REACTOR. THE 200 METRIC TONS TO BE SOLD BY RUSSIA IS BELIEVED TO BE JUST ABOUT ENOUGH TO "LOAD" AND RESUPPLY THE RAPP II REACTOR, WHICH WILL PROVIDE POWER TO A LARGE AREA OF NORTHWEST INDIA NEAR THE BORDER WITH PAKISTAN.

10. CANADA HALTED ITS NUCLEAR SALES TO AND OTHER COOPE-

RATION WITH INDIA AFTER THE 1974 EXPLOSION. IT MADE
THE CUTOFF PERMANENT THIS MAY AFTER TWO YEARS OF UNSUC-

CESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS ON ANTI-BOMB ASSURANCES. AMONG
OTHER THINGS, CANADA WANTED INDIA TO PLACE ALL ITS
NUCLEAR FACILITIES -- INCLUDING THOSE WHICH HAD BEEN
USED TO MAKE THE EXPLOSIVE DEVICE -- UNDER INTERNATIONAL
INSPECTION BY THE IAEA. THIS INDIA REFUSED TO DO.

11. THE SOVIET PROPOSAL AT LAST MONTH'S LONDON MEETING
WOULD REQUIRE A NON-WEAPONS STATE TO OPEN ALL ITS ATOMIC
FACILITIES TO INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS AS A CONDITION OF
PURCHASES FROM THE NUCLEAR SUPPLIER STATES. ACCORDING
TO STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS, THE UNITED STATES FAVORS
SUCH A PLAN IN PRINCIPLE IF OTHER COUNTRIES AGREE TO
ABIDE BY IT.

12. AT PRESENT, ISRAEL AND SOUTH AFRICA AS WELL AS
INDIA OPERATE SOME NUCLEAR FACILITIES WHICH ARE OUTSIDE
INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS. HOWEVER, ALL THREE COUNTRIES
ARE ON THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S APPROVED LIST FOR CONTINUED
NUCLEAR COOPERATION.

13. THE LICENSE FOR A U.S. SHIPMENT OF ENRICHED URANIUM
FUEL TO INDIA IS BEING HELD UP BY THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY
COMMISSION PENDING THE OUTCOME OF U.S. INDIAN DISCUS-
SIONS ON INDIA'S RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES OF IRRADIA-
TED REACTOR MATERIAL WHICH COULD BE USED TO MAKE ATOMIC
WEAPONS. U.S. OFFICIALS SAID THAT WHILE THE INDIANS
HAVE SHOWN A COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE, THE TWO SIDES ARE FAR
APART ON FINANCIAL AND LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS.

14. DURING HIS CAMPAIGN FOR THE PRESIDENCY, CARTER
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PLACED HEAVY STRESS ON STRONGER ACTION TO STOP THE
SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. IN A SEPT. 25 SPEECH, HE
DECLARED HE WOULD MAKE NO NEW COMMITMENTS FOR THE SALE
OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY OR FUEL TO COUNTRIES WHICH REFUSE
TO PLACE THEIR NUCLEAR FACILITIES UNDER IAEA SAFEGUARDS.

15. CARTER ALSO STRESSED THE NEED TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE
SOVIET UNION AND OTHER NUCLEAR POWERS ON NONPROLIFERA-
TION AND DISARMAMENT ISSUES. END TEXT. ROBINSON

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